

# The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive

***Thank you for participating in this day of blood drives  
honoring Captain Matthew LeTourneau!***



Our family considers every blood donor to be a hero. Anyone who takes time out of their day to help save lives is someone special! But today, we are paying tribute to an exceptional person who made saving lives his way of life.

Captain Matthew LeTourneau of the Philadelphia Fire Department exemplified heroism. He started his career as a firefighter and EMT in Delaware County, eventually becoming a life member of the Springfield Fire Company. As an instructor at the Delaware County Emergency Services Training Center, he trained firefighters from departments around the region, including members of the Radnor Fire Company. He rose through the ranks of the Philadelphia Fire Department during his distinguished 11-year career there.

Captain LeTourneau also committed time and resources to many volunteer groups. Among them were the Philadelphia 2nd Alarmers, an organization that provides support to first responders during disasters, and several animal welfare groups. On top of all that, he was a committed blood donor.

We are honored that Captain LeTourneau was a regular donor at our blood drives. He came to donate after overnight shifts or before a long day of training other firefighters. He always arrived with a smile and often offered compliments as he left.

On January 6, Captain LeTourneau died in the line of duty while attempting to rescue the occupant of a burning home in North Philadelphia. After hearing this news, we wanted to find a way to honor his service and his commitment to saving lives. We are proud to dedicate today's blood drive to him, and we are happy to be joined by seven other blood drives throughout our region that are also paying tribute by encouraging their donors to #GiveBloodToHonorMatt. In addition, donors outside this area are using social media to post pictures of themselves donating blood with the hashtag.

At the end of this daylong tribute, the total number of units donated in Captain LeTourneau's name will be calculated and a monetary donation will be made to the Philadelphia 2nd Alarmers, to help them continue their mission of providing respite and relief to those who risk so much to keep the rest of us safe.

We were privileged to know Matthew LeTourneau, and we are fortunate to have been able to work closely with his loved ones to plan today's events. We thank you for your participation in this special effort to honor the courage, sacrifice, and heroism of all first responders through your blood donation in Captain LeTourneau's memory today.



~ Michelle and Dan Scolnick 

## #GiveBloodToHonorMatt CHALLENGE

All day on May 8, blood donors throughout the Philadelphia region and beyond will be donating blood in memory of Matthew LeTourneau under the hashtag #GiveBloodToHonorMatt.

At the end of this daylong tribute, the total number of units donated in his memory will be calculated, and a monetary donation will be made to the **Philadelphia 2nd Alarmers Association**, an all-volunteer organization that provides on-scene support to first responders during disasters.

For more information about the mission of the 2nd Alarmers, or to volunteer or make a donation, visit <https://www.facebook.com/2ndAlarmers>.

**Philadelphia 2nd Alarmers**  
2900 Roberts Avenue ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19129  
(215) 223-1936

## Mark your calendars!

### The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive

#### Dates and Locations of Upcoming Drives

**July 11, 2018**

**The Reserve at Gwynedd - Lansdale, PA**



**October 15 & 16, 2018**

**11th Annual Carol H. Axelrod Memorial  
Blood Drive at Lankenau Medical Center  
Wynnewood, PA**

For more information about any of our blood drives, please  
visit [www.chablooddrive.org](http://www.chablooddrive.org)

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook: @CHABloodDrive  
and on Instagram: @cha\_blooddrive

**I CHANGE LIVES  
I DONATE BLOOD**

The Carol H. Axelrod Memorial Blood Drive  
[www.chablooddrive.org](http://www.chablooddrive.org)

### *The Story Behind Our Family's Blood Drives*

Our family knows from personal experience that blood donors give hospital patients and their loved ones an incomparable gift: the gift of time. Whether a blood donation is used to save a life, to prolong a life, or to improve the quality of life, it allows families to spend more time together, making special memories. Thanks to the generosity of blood donors, our family was given another year with the mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and aunt we loved.

Carol, a single mother of two daughters, was an elementary school teacher in Philadelphia for over 30 years. In April 2003, she was 55 years old and starting to look ahead to retirement when she was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, an incurable cancer of the blood and bone marrow. In 2004, Carol's disease progressed to the point where her doctor recommended that she undergo two autologous stem-cell transplants, the most aggressive treatment then available to myeloma patients. Although the procedures did put her disease into remission, the cancer returned less than a year later, and in an extremely aggressive form.

In July 2007, just two months before her 60th birthday, Carol was hospitalized as the result of a complication of her illness. At that point, the only thing the doctors could do to try to stabilize the situation was give her multiple transfusions of blood and platelets and hope that her body would eventually start to do what it needed to do to heal itself.

For almost two weeks, Carol received multiple transfusions each day. The doctors said that she could die at any time, especially if they were unable to find the blood products she needed. But incredibly, those blood products were always there—because of all the people who had donated the blood that the doctors were using to try to save her life.

Thanks to blood donors, Carol ultimately was able to leave the hospital. Although she could not resume treatment for the cancer, she was able to live independently and enjoy almost all of her usual activities because, for nearly a year, she received blood and platelet transfusions at least twice a week. Thanks to blood donors, she was able to celebrate her 60th birthday and see her granddaughter turn three years old. And thanks to blood donors, Carol lived until July 1, 2008, enabling her to make a year's worth of memories with her loved ones.

Our family feels that we owe all the special memories of that last year to the generosity of blood donors. Carol's doctors told us that they had never had a patient who was transfusion-dependent for as long as she was. They were amazed that she lived as long as she did, with her only treatment being transfusions of blood and platelets. We were so grateful that the blood products she needed were always available for her.

After Carol passed away, our family organized a blood drive in her memory at Lankenau Medical Center, the hospital where she had received the transfusions. Held in October 2008, it turned out to be the hospital's most successful blood drive up to that point. We decided to turn the blood drive into an annual event and hold it in multiple locations. With every blood drive we hold, we hope to be able to help even more people who need transfusions. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood; and nine out of ten people will require a blood transfusion at some point during their lives.

Blood donors were the only people who could give our family an extra year with Carol. We created this memorial blood drive in order to help other patients and families by doing our part to ensure that blood products are always available for those who need them. Thanks to donors who are willing to take a little time out of their day to give blood, these patients are able to continue to fight their illnesses—and spend more time with their loved ones.